

**Minutes:** Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Glamire Solar Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)  
Held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, Bathurst

**Tuesday 26 April 2022**

**Members Present:** Tim Averill (TA, Elgin Energy), Shane Melotte (SM, Elgin Energy), Ben Smith (BS, NGH Consulting), Jack Fry (JF, Bathurst Climate Change Action Group), Rebecca Welsh (RW), Ewan Chandler (EC), Jan Page (JP, Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association), Andrew Young (AY), Polly Bonanno (PB, Glanmire Action Group), Neil Southorn (NS, Bathurst Regional Council).

**Apologies:** Dr Jim Blackwood (Bathurst Climate Change Action Group)

**Independent Chair:** David Ross

**Independent Secretary:** Jeannine Bryant

**Guest:** Murray Fraser (MF, SLR Consulting)

<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Who to Present</b>
1. Introductions and apologies	David Ross
2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests	David Ross and all
3. Previous Minutes	David Ross
4. Business Arising from Minutes	All
5. Correspondence	David Ross
6. The Agricultural Impact Assessment a. Group discussions	Tim Averill, Shane Melotte, Ben Smith, Murray Fraser
7. General Business	All
8. Next meeting: 17 May 2022.	David Ross and All

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  DR welcomed members and alternates to the second CCC meeting, introducing Jeannine Bryant as the independent secretary. DR advised he has endeavoured to fill the vacant position following the resignation of PH.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests</b> – DR advised that he is paid a fee to chair these meetings and JB is also paid a fee to take minutes of the meetings.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Agricultural Impact Assessment</b> (Agenda Item 6; copy of presentation attached to minutes)</p> <p>DR requested that Item 6 be moved up the order of proceedings to allow MF to present via video call. CCC members were in agreeance. BS prepared the Glanmire Solar Farm Frequently Asked Questions document from CCC members' questions, and hoped this document was useful.</p> <p>MF undertook the original two agricultural impact assessments – agricultural soil capability types and biophysical agricultural land, which was previously submitted to the DPE with the scoping report.</p> <p>EC asked how did you measure the soil segments MF replied that is how the horizons come into effect. Keep going through the soil layers as past farming practices have changed levels. Poor farming practices can be detrimental to the subsoil. On the Glanmire site, farming can change the properties of the soil but not the soil type.</p> <p>EC asked questions about soil sampling that has taken place within the paddock that has been excluded from the proposed site as well as ear watercourses. He questioned whether this impacts upon the quality of data obtained as all may be part of not trying to pick out worst soil to test. Will your answer be the same for the land that the solar farm is built on? MF replied that the answer will the same and stated that sampling sites are not in water courses, drainage lines and dams. He notes that according to the NSW Government Guidelines only three profile sites needed to be sampled for EIS. However, he undertook 14 sample sites and by gaining more information on the site, he believed that he was able to get a better picture of what is going on.</p> <p>MF advised CCC members that the land being used for the Solar Farm will not be sterilised for grazing at a later date. Key message is that there won't be any long-term impact on the land when the project has been completed other than the substation which would normally be transferred to ownership of Essential Energy and remain on site after the project is removed. Otherwise, the land will be able to be used as it was prior to the establishment of the Solar Farm.</p>	

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A discussion was held between committee members about finding of the study and whether carbon would be removed from the land from having a solar farm situated on it. EC asked about carbon being taken out of the soil. MF and NS observed that, provided that land management practices were undertaken in an appropriate manner, carbon would be retained in the soil. MF, for example, advised the land is moderately acidic. However, if you are not cropping for that period of time, the land would not need to be limed to help build carbon in the soil carbon.

DR then split members into groups to further explore the ramifications of the AIS. What do members believe are the main issues? Are there any gaps? Is there any advice that members have for MF?

After the group discussions, JF observed to the wider committee that extreme climate change over the next 20-40 years could be a significant concern for agriculture on the site. He notes that it is anticipated that there will be more droughts or increased rain with grazing/cropping resulting in a harder topsoil and run off over the next 40 years. So, contours should be added into the proposal to slow down water through channels.

In response, MF observed that he is more interested in climate impacts going forward than climate change as such. In relation to diversion banks to slow down water this will be covered in the surface water impact study. He also noted that grazing and stocking rates on this soil are really high. Moving stock around soil can handle the treading of topsoil – but needs a resting period.

MF replied that, if topsoil is being moved and stockpiled for future use, then the soil can be treated by adding gypsum. With respect to potential reduction in grazing capacity, MF notes that is to be part of the agricultural economics impact study.

DR thanked MF for his time this evening.

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**4. Previous Minutes** (Agenda Item 3)

Members were comfortable that the minutes were an appropriate reflection of what was discussed at the first meeting.

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**5. Business Arising from Minutes** (Agenda 4)

EC raised concerns with the number of meetings that DR had mentioned that he was setting for the CCC. EC believed there were insufficient scheduled meetings to deal with issues surrounding the proposed project. DR informed members that, should the proposal be approved, the CCC could actually be meeting for years to come. This would particularly be the case during construction. However, as raised in the first meeting, the CCC was formed by DPE to allow members to provide input while the environmental impact statement was being developed.

DR to speak to Department about concerns raised.

A lengthy discussion was then held between EC and DR regarding the applicability of the DPE CCC Guidelines in relation to instructing the process.

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DR observed that there is difficulty in that the Guidelines do not prescribe a detailed process for projects pre-determination. He has therefore had to weigh the needs of the proponent and committee in identifying the number of committee meetings to be held before the environmental impact statement is submitted. However, he has tried to design the meetings with members having input.

EC argued that the Guidelines do, in fact, cover situations like the one the CCC currently faced. He read out paragraphs from the Guidelines to prove his point. However, DR reminded CCC members of an email he had forwarded to members within the last 2-3 weeks inviting members to provide comments to DPE on their current efforts to revise the Guidelines because they do not provide detailed guidance with respect to proposals.

EC expressed a concern that 'are we making it up as we go along?' DR advised that he follows the majority of what is in the Guidelines. However, with the design of the agenda (specific to proposal-stage CCCs) and the number of meetings to be held, he is provided with few instructions from the Guidelines. He reminded members that CCCs are advisory in nature rather than decision making bodies and accepts this can be challenging. DR also advised if CCC members are not happy with current arrangements they are welcome to contact the DPE.

**EC chose to leave meeting at 8.25 pm.**

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**6. Correspondence** (Agenda Item 5)

- DR reminded members that he had received Peter Hennessy's resignation from the CCC recently. A copy of his resignation letter was forwarded to CCC members and to the Department of Planning (as per his instructions). DR's response to the letter had also been provided previously to CCC members.
- DR advised CCC members that Christine Curry submitted her resignation, via email, on the Friday before the current CCC meeting.

DR to provide copy of CC's resignation to CCC members.

DR sincerely thanked PH and CC for their interest in the CCC.

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**7. General Business** (Agenda Item 6)

In response to EC's previous concerns, TA advised that the Glanmire Solar Farm is the first to have a CCC in place in Australia. The aim is to listen to community groups and community members, mitigate issues by answering questions as they arise from CCC members and in the design of the project. This is new territory for company as well. DR reminded members that at the last meeting you asked about discussing the AIS, and accordingly, BS arranged for MF to answer questions that CCC members raised.

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PB mentioned that the proposal has been going for 18 months working out what is trying to be done. What's the point in waiting till after the EIS has been completed, we want discussions now. She advised he had not received responses prepared by TA and SM addressing the questions that have come up in the CCC.

DR to provide documents to PB associated with the first meeting.

#### Social Impact Study and Scoping report

BS advised he and his team would like to speak at the CCC next meeting, covering visual impact, noise and social impact and an update on the progress of the other technical assessments and identify people to interview on certain aspects of the social impact assessment. Members agreed to this.

JP reiterated that the dust on Brewongle Lane associated with vehicle movements would be a concern.

SM stated traffic and dust are certainly an issue and if the road is not sealed the road will have to be watered.

NS stated the road is a public road and it should be sealed, need traffic lights, see if turning lane is required.

TA noted traffic management issues to be worked through.

#### Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

DR provided a summary of what needs to take place and what will happen over the next few months. The CCC forms part of the consultation associated with the EIS along with specialist consultations that will continue to be undertaken.

TA noted that the Development Application (DA) should be lodged later in 2022. DR and NS both agreed that once the EIS goes on exhibition, the time allocated for submissions from the general public, interested groups, council etc on the Solar Farm proposal is 28 days.

NS asked if the specialist impact assessment studies will be available to CCC members before it goes to the public domain? BRC would like time to read all the reports as well. In response, TA observed that this would notably impact upon the timing of submitting the EIS.

#### Other Business

BS spoke on efforts to continue community engagement. Elgin Energy representatives will be speaking to BRC Councillors tomorrow, and discussions with the Bathurst Business Chamber executives. An on-line survey is to be conducted.

PB reiterated that Elgin should undertake an open community meeting with the Glanmire Action Group and listen to community input.

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JF noted that, as President of the BCCAN, the Network had discussed the individual points raised in PH's one page letter, explaining the concerns that residents had with the proposal. Some BCCAN members questioned the points raised as well as the conduct of people at the last CCC meeting.

SM stated that Elgin Energy will send invitations to local Indigenous people and groups inviting them to be involved in the project. Visual impact assessors need access to site to do photomontage and check where screening can be put up. Topography in progress, Traffic study is about to start, track specific number of trucks bringing infrastructure onto the site and access impact of traffic to ensure safety. Hydrology – trying to get a sense of clarity of how the first and second water ways are impacted. Need more data in the next few weeks. Noise Impact Assessment is underway. Final layout, including location for battery will be informed by these assessments

SM will provide an update where the footprint is heading at the next CCC meeting.

#### CCC email addresses

DR had a request from CC seeking CCC members permission for their email addresses to be provided to people at the Bathurst Show and other occasions who are interested in the proposal. CCC members agreed that their email addresses are to remain private. It was agreed that BRC email address [council@bathurst.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bathurst.nsw.gov.au) be provided along with DR's work email.

#### Miscellaneous

BS described to the CCC members the process of preparing the Visual Impact Assessment and made sure people are comfortable with the processes.

RW stated her interest in the site specific Hydrology report

JF is interested in the Visual Impact Assessment in relation to biodiversity and animals.

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#### **9. Next Meeting date**

DR confirmed the next meeting of the CCC will take place on 17 May 2022 at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre.

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SM to provide update at next meeting re footprint and site layout.

DR to provide his email address and BRC TA.

**Meeting Closed: 9.20 pm**

**Appendix 1: Actions**

<b>Page No</b>	<b>Action No</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>
3	1	DR to speak to Department about concerns raised by EC.	26 April 2022
4	2	DR to provide copy of CC's resignation to CCC members	26 April 2022
4	3	DR to provide documents to PB associated with the first meeting.	26 April 2022
6	4	SM to provide update at next meeting re footprint and site layout	26 April 2022
6	5	DR to provide his email address and BRC's to TA	26 April 2022